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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
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CDCOUNTRY East Germany  
SUBJECT 1953 East German Potato Harvest and Collection Program

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1. The 1953 potato harvest in East Germany amounted to approximately 9,200,000 metric tons. This represents an average yield of 11 metric tons per hectare for the 836,416 hectares used for the growing of potatoes. Total estimated needs of East Germany until the beginning of the 1954 potato harvest are 14,877,000 metric tons. This indicates a shortage of 5,677,000 metric tons.

2. The following table gives figures on East German potato requirements and on the 1953 harvest. All amounts are in metric tons:

a. Total 1953 potato yield	9,200,000
b. Receipts thus far, and anticipated requirements until June 1954:	
1) Government Collection Program, including obligatory deliveries (Erfassung) and purchase (Aufkauf)	4,950,000
2) Needed by farmers for their use, and payment in kind to laborers - 2,420,000 persons at 300 kg per person	726,000
3) Seed potatoes, not including high-grade seed potatoes kept by Government	1,455,000
4) Feed potatoes for pigs and poultry at 1 metric ton per pig, assuming 7,500,000 pigs	7,500,000
5) Wastage (6%)	246,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,877,000</b>

- c. Breakdown of Government-Collected Potatoes:

1) Actually obtained (Collection and Purchase)	4,950,000
2) Anticipated Requirements	

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25 YEAR  
RE-REVIEW

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a) Consumer requirements until 1954 harvest	3,420,000
b) Starch industry	550,000
c) High grade seed potatoes kept by government	500,000
d) For ZKFF <sup>1</sup>	150,000
e) For large consumers and special customers	600,000
f) Export of late potatoes from the 1953 harvest to West Berlin	40,000
g) Wastage, 6% of approximately 5,000,000 metric tons	<u>300,000</u>
TOTAL	5,560,000

This leaves a shortage of 610,000 metric tons of potatoes for Government distribution.

3. The entire yield at the farmer level includes the following:

a. Government-requisitioned crops, including:

- 1) Collection of assigned delivery quotas.
- 2) Collection of deficits from former years.
- 3) Purchase of potatoes from farmers who have already satisfied their delivery quotas under the collection plan. Farmers do not care to sell potatoes under this program, as they can obtain much more credit or cash if the extra potatoes they may have, are used to feed livestock. There is a pronounced tendency for farmers this year to take "New Course" statements at face value. It had been declared that farmers need to turn in only the amount they can spare from their own needs. Thus, farmers are saying that they cannot fill their delivery quotas, but can only deliver between 60 and 70 percent of these quotas.

b. Use by farmer, including:

- 1) Own household use.
- 2) Payment in kind for farm laborers.
- 3) Seed potatoes for own use.
- 4) Livestock fodder
- 5) Payment in kind for industrial equipment which cannot be bought for cash. Industries are demanding payment in food for their shop kitchens, as their food allocations are insufficient. If a farmer needs to buy an article of machinery or a replacement part available only in West Berlin, he must draw upon his private store of food (mostly potatoes) and convert it into cash for payment for the required items.

4. As early as September 1953, the pertinent East German government officials knew that there would be a potato shortage. Official harvest inspectors forecast, at that time, a potato harvest of only 7,500,000 metric tons.

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5. Steps were taken to reduce the potato consumption by substituting other foods. Allocations to the alcoholic beverage industry were cut 75 percent for the period from 1 July 1953 through 30 June 1954. Larger cuts in this category were impossible as the July-September allocations to the alcohol industry had already been used up. For the balance of 1953, 18,000 metric tons of grain were allocated to the alcohol industry. The 1954 plan calls for 40,000 to 60,000 metric tons of grain for industrial allocation for the manufacture of alcohol. Fodder potatoes, normally sold to farmers for livestock are being replaced by bran, soybean scrap, peanut scrap and rape scrap. The 1954 plan also calls for the use of fodder barley instead of fodder potatoes. Farmers are generally dissatisfied with this arrangement, as these substitutes do not fatten pigs the way potatoes do. The industrial and fodder potatoes thus saved are mixed with regular food potatoes and are sold for direct human consumption, though they are below standard.
6. The minimum required allotment of potatoes per capita until 1 July 1954 has been established at 160 kilograms. The official potato ration, however, has been set at 140 kilograms for the same period. Of the 140 kilograms, only 125 may be drawn in the fall of 1953 for individual storage (*eigene Einkellerung*) or, if so stated at the beginning of the storage period, can be drawn in small amounts at one time by those who have no storage facilities. In East Berlin, this storage was 75 percent complete as of 20 November, with some hope that the remaining 25 percent of the 125 kilograms will become available later. East Berlin enjoys an advantage in this respect. In Magdeburg, Leipzig, Frankfurt/Oder, and outstanding industrial areas such as Wismar, Buns and Leuna, approximately 68 to 70 percent had been made available for storage as of 20 November. These areas have a fair chance of getting the additional 25 percent. Small cities, towns, villages, have been supplied with 40 to 60 percent of the 125 kilograms, with little hope of obtaining the balance. Because of the inadequate results of the collection program, the additional 15 kilograms per capita to be made available in late spring, 1954 can only be obtained from imports.
7. Steps were taken during October to attain the planned collection quotas. These included:
  - a. During the actual harvest period government and industrial workers were sent to assist in the potato harvest, as there were not enough farmers to realize the crop.
  - b. After the harvest was in, and when it appeared that the farmers would not meet their delivery quotas, certain categories of persons were sent to rural areas to assist in the collection program:
    - 1) Employees of the VVEAB.
      - a) Erfasser (collector); they were given daily quotas which they had to collect from farmers. Those with highest percentage of overfulfillment of their quotas were given cash awards. Continued underfulfillment led to eventual dismissal.
      - b) Office personnel; almost all other office employees of the VVEABs spent up to three days a week collecting potatoes, with awards for the overfulfillment of their quotas.
    - 2) Party and Mass Organizations.
      - a) Rural groups - The most progressive functionaries of the SED, FDJ, CDU, BP and VdGB were designated to act as "discussion leaders" with farmers. The composition of groups depended on the political membership of the area. FDJ groups included members over 18 years of age.
      - b) City groups - SED and FDJ functionaries from cities were sent to rural areas under the leadership of an administrative official of the Department for Collection and Purchase of the Bezirk and Kreis Councils, members of the local VVEABs or VVEABs. The size of these groups depended upon the structure of the Bezirk area to be canvassed.

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- 3) Workers from the industries - Idea: Industrial workers were supposed to force or threaten farmers into turning in more potatoes to collection-agencies. Actual results: City workers saw the miserable functioning of the planned economy and came back more dissatisfied with their Government than before. In the week 9-14 November, 300 industrial workers were sent from Saxony to Mecklenburg, to assist in the procurement program in this fashion. Groups from 2) and 3) above are mixed frequently.
  - 4) Office workers from government agencies: The State Secretariat for Collection and Purchase of Agricultural Products sent between 30 and 50 employees for one or two weeks at a time to assist with the collection program in rural areas. Principally, leading functionaries were chosen: 75 percent of all department heads and Haupt- and Oberreferente were sent.
  - 5) From 18 November to 30 November, almost all ministers and state secretaries were stumping rural areas at farmer gatherings and public discussions, pointing out the special importance of the fulfillment of the collection program.
8. For a picture of the development of the collection (Erfassung) and purchase (Aufkauf) program during the 1953 harvest, see the attachment.<sup>2</sup>

Comments:

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1. Zentraler Kraft und Futter Fonds.
2. All figures and information contained here are reported as received.

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<u>Bezirk</u>	<u>1953 Plan</u>	<u>% Procure- ment 10 Sept</u>	<u>% Pur- chase</u>	<u>% Act- ual 30 Sept</u>	<u>Attachment #1</u>		
					<u>% Pur- chase</u>	<u>Actual- 10 Nov. in metric tons</u>	<u>in %</u>
Rostock	349,171	12.9	0.3	20.7	0.3	270,660	77.5
Schwerin	426,511	11.6	0.2	20.1	0.2	330,735	77.3
Neubrandenburg	503,146	10.5	0.5	18.8	0.5	370,925	73.7
Potsdam	577,992	13.0	0.9	23.2	1.2	431,439	74.6
Frankfurt/Oder	316,540	11.2	0.5	19.6	0.5	209,741	66.3
Cottbus	252,350	16.0	-	26.6	0.2	215,572	85.4
Magdeburg	524,589	18.0	0.4	34.8	0.4	426,011	81.2
Halle	325,028	22.4	0.4	37.4	0.4	272,328	83.8
Erfurt	262,371	22.4	-	38.0	-	226,737	86.4
Gera	131,607	13.8	-	21.8	-	106,129	80.6
Suhl	50,125	20.8	-	44.9	-	45,804	91.4
Dresden	330,665	18.3	0.5	28.4	0.5	276,318	83.6
Leipzig	262,374	21.3	0.7	33.2	0.8	215,018	82.0
Chemnitz	249,750	12.9	0.3	19.8	0.3	229,863	92.0
East Berlin	17,781	14.1	-	29.8	-	9,986	56.2
East German TOTALS	4,580,000	15.4	0.4	26.3	0.4	3,637,266	79.4

10 September:	Credited percent of Procurement	15.4 %
	Percent of Purchase	0.4 %
	Actual Procurement	704,686 metric tons
30 September:	Credited Percent of Procurement	26.3 % (21.0)
	Percent of Purchase	0.4 %
	Actual Procurement	925,712 metric tons
	Actual Purchase	444 metric tons
10 November:	Credited percent of Procurement	79.4 %
	Actual Procurement	3,637,266 metric tons
20 November:	Actual Procurement	4,600,000 metric tons
	Actual Purchase	350,000 metric tons

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